

Message Text

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45

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 IGA-02 T-03 MC-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01

INRE-00 /111 W

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P R 191616 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2384

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 1025

E. O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: MASS, ES

SUBJECT: SALVADORAN AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION

1. THE USAF CONSULTATION TEAM VISIT (MAR 14-15) PROVED HIGHLY USEFUL, IN THAT IT PROVIDED ME WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO TELL THE MOD THAT THE HONDURANS HAD INDICATED AN INTEREST IN 6 A-37 S, NEWS WHICH FAILED TO FAZE HIM. I WAS SURPRISED, BUT THE PARTING VISIT OF THE TAAM WITH THE MOD PROVIDED THE ANSWER: THE SAF INITIAL DECISION FOR 4 T-37 S WAS THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. THEY APPARENTLY WERE ATTRACTED BY COST AND RELATIVELY EARLY DELIVERY; THEY NEED TRAINING? AND THEY THOUGHT OUR PACKAGES WERE IMMUTABLE. THEREFORE, IT WAS LOGICAL TO ORDER THE TRAINERS. THE NEXT STEP, HOWEVER, WOULD BE TO ORDER COMBAT CRAFT, HOPEFULLY EIGHT A-37 S, WITHIN A YEAR OR TWO.

2. FYI, I HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO THE VISITING TEAM THAT I DID NOT WANT US IN THE POSITION OF ARMS MERCHANTS;, I. E. WE WERE HERE TO HELP CARRY OUT SALVADORAN WISHES WITHIN OUR OWN PARITY PARAMETERS. THEREFORE, NEITHER THE TEAM NOR

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OUR MILGP PEOPLE WERE TO TRY TO SELL THE SAF, FOR
WHATEVER REASON, ON ANY VARIATION OF THEIR PLANS; THEY
WERE ONESTLY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, PERIOD. IN LIGHT OF
OUR NEW INFORMATION, HOWEVER, I FEEL NO HESITANCY IN
LETTING THE SAF BENEFIT FROM THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT
OF OUR AF PEOPLE, NAMELY THAT PURCHASE OF THE T-37 S WOULD BE
AN UNSOUND INVESTMENT. BOTH THE VISITING TEAM AND OUR MILGP
FEEL A-37 S WOULD BE A MUCH BETTER DEAL IN THE LONG RUN: THEY
WOULD BE NEW, THEY COULD BE PAID FOR DURING MORE THAN ONE
FISCAL YEAR, THEY TOO COULD BE HAD RELATIVELY QUICKLY, AND
MAINTENANCE OF ONLY ONE MODEL WOULD BE MUCH SIMPLER.

3. COMMENT: THE COUNTRY TEAM BELIEVES THAT FOR THE PRESENT,
THE WISEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE
SAF TO BUY THE 6 A-37 S, THUS MAINTAINING PARITY WITH
HONDURAS AND KEEPING BUDGETARY STRAIN WITHIN BOUNDS.
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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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